UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/961
S/1997/624
8 August 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-first session
Agenda item 58
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 7 August 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to a new "agreement" between Turkey and the illegal entity in the Turkish-occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus, aiming at the implementation of previous threats for integration of the occupied part of Cyprus to mainland Turkey. The so-called "association agreement" was signed on 6 August 1997, during a visit of the Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mr. Ismail Cem, heading a high-level delegation from Turkey to the Turkish-occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus.

The "association agreement" provides, inter alia, for the establishment of a 20-member "association council", which is designed to begin a process leading to gradual economic and financial integration and partial integration on security, defence and foreign-policy matters of the occupied areas of Cyprus into Turkey.

This provocative action took place only five days before the commencement of the second round of inter-communal talks on Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations in Montreux, Switzerland, scheduled to be held from 11 to 16 August 1997. It follows the "joint declaration" issued by the Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Bulent Ecevit, and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community, Mr. Rauf Denktash, on 20 July 1997 during the former's visit to the occupied areas, as indicated in my letter to you of 22 July 1997 (A/51/948-S/1997/580 and Corr.1).

These illegal and condemnable actions by Turkey, which aim at institutionalizing and consolidating the de facto partition of Cyprus - enforced by the Turkish occupation forces - and the integration of the occupied areas into Turkey, are in contravention of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions on Cyprus.

They are, also, in complete disregard of and an affront to the international community, the United Nations and especially the Security Council.

The demonstration of such a hostile attitude by Turkey, taking place at a most sensitive period, constitutes a policy of blackmail on the eve of the second round of the United Nations-sponsored direct talks between the two Cypriot communities. It also undermines the ongoing efforts of the international community to reach a solution of the Cyprus problem, by the addition of new faits accomplis to the status quo, which is universally regarded as unacceptable. It manifests, once again, the continued violation by Turkey of its solemn international obligations towards the Republic of Cyprus.

These actions are allegedly taken in response to and in retaliation for the inclusion of Cyprus in the European Commission's report entitled "Agenda 2000", where Cyprus is regarded as one of the countries eligible for membership to the European Union and for the commencement of accession negotiations.

However, such inclusion does not constitute a new decision. In fact, as early as July 1993 the Commission delivered a favourable opinion on Cyprus' application for membership. The Council of the European Union decided on 6 March 1995 to commence accession negotiations with Cyprus six months after the Intergovernmental Conference. That decision was subsequently reaffirmed on several occasions at the highest level by the European Council, most recently in June 1996 in Florence, Italy.

Thus, the timing and the manner of the Turkish reaction is clearly nothing but a mere pretext and is revealing of the real intentions of Turkey with regard to Cyprus. Moreover, it demonstrates the complete lack of political will for a solution of the Cyprus problem on the part of Turkey.

The international community would rather have expected Turkey to welcome the prospect of Cyprus' becoming a member of the European Union and, consequently, contributing constructively to the solution of the Cyprus problem, thereby giving an opportunity to all the people of Cyprus, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike, to build a common home in a united country in conditions of peace, security, stability and progress, in partnership with a democratic Europe of over 400 million people. This is also the aspiration of an increasing number of other European States, which ardently desire membership to the European Union, including Turkey. However, as it is clearly stated in paragraph 10 of the European Parliament's resolution of 12 July 1995, "the accession of Cyprus is an autonomous process and ... Cyprus should not be a hostage of relations between the Union and Turkey, as the Commission and the Council have confirmed in various statements".

I wish to stress once again, in the strongest possible terms, my Government's protest against these new illegal Turkish actions, which could affect the good climate established in the first round of United Nations-sponsored talks in New York and could seriously impede the negotiating process at a time of increased interest and involvement on the part of the international community.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus, for its part, expresses the sincere wish and hope that progress will be achieved in the forthcoming talks in Montreux and to that end the Greek Cypriot side will attend these talks in good faith and with the necessary political will and determination and do everything in its power to achieve a viable solution to the Cyprus problem based on the relevant decisions of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nicos AGATHOCLEOUS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative